

The Chord Company

Clearway analogue RCA interconnect



HAND BUILT IN Wiltshire, The Chord Company's Clearway interconnect uses the maker's proprietary ARAY technology like the C-Line RCA interconnect (HFC 403). This was originally developed for its flagship Sarum range and was designed to offer improvements in detail and transparency. Building on the C-Line ARAY design, the Clearway improves the conductors by using a very high-purity oxygen-free copper. The insulation has also been upgraded to Fluorinated Ethylene Propylene (FEP) and the cable is screened with a higher density foil to improve shielding. It's terminated with VEE 3 direct silver-plated RCA plugs, but can also come with DIN or XLRs and can be custom made to any length.

One direction

I connect the interconnect between my preamp and monoblocks with the arrows pointing towards the monoblocks, and run them in by playing music with the monoblocks switched off for 10 hours before undertaking any subjective listening tests. I start off with Saint-Saëns *Organ Symphony No.3* played by The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Louis Frémaux. This recording is noted for some really deep organ notes during the first movement. The power and emotion is incredible, and the Clearway has no problem conveying this to my monoblock amplification without restraint. The more joyful second movement is sprightly and tuneful, and all sections of the orchestra are clear and well positioned within the soundstage.

Turning to some baroque music to check out Clearway's handling of solo instruments, a delicate recording of Rameau harpsichord pieces played by George Malcolm demonstrates its sophisticated handling of the instrument. I am really drawn into the performance by the intimate playing of all the complexities of the piece and the



tonal variations of the pedal stops. The leading edges and natural decays of each note of the harpsichord contributes well to the overall realism of the reproduction.

It's time to lighten the mood with some classic Latin music played on the guitar by Tony Mottola. His version of Cole Porter's *I Love You* is light, airy and tuneful, with a perfect balance between the guitar, flute and drums. As with the solo harpsichord music, the tonal details of each instrument are extremely well conveyed and musical.

To see how the Clearway performs with vocals, I select David Bowie's *The Stars (Are Out Tonight)*. Vocals are clear and not submerged into the drums or guitar accompaniment, which is quite an achievement with this piece of rock music as they are very prominent throughout the track. In addition, the vocal is reproduced extremely accurately.

To focus on the Clearway's bass response, I opt for *Black Lightning* from Gordon Giltrap's *Airwaves*. The guitar playing demonstrates a great

musicality and the bass line is well extended, yet punchy and tight – just as I like it.

I finish off proceedings with a superb direct-to-disc vinyl audiophile recording of the Syd Lawrence Orchestra playing Benny Goodman's *Sing, Sing, Sing*. This is an exuberant recording and the trumpet and trombone solos are sharp and natural without becoming unpleasantly harsh. The drums that resound throughout the piece are punchy and the Clearway takes the whole thing comfortably in its stride.

Ear for detail

To sum up, this interconnect very much fulfils the objective of creating a set of analogue cables that can carry a signal with a sense of musical coherence and a high level of detail and dynamics. All of this leads to a great insight and involvement into any music you listen to. If you are considering an upgrade from a set of budget interconnects, the Clearway gives you every reason to re-explore your music collection. **NR**

DETAILS

PRICE
£100 for a 1m pair
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OUR VERDICT

